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UNCLAS AMMAN 000245

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ AND THE PALESTINIAN  
"TRANSFER"

#### Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, January 13, are highlights of King Abdullah's remarks during an interview with the Jordan News Agency, in which he addressed numerous domestic and international issues. In addition to stating that parliamentary elections would be held by June 2003, the King warned of the negative repercussions of a war on Iraq, stating that such a war would complicate finding a solution to the Palestinian issue.

#### Editorial Commentary on Iraq

-- "Will Saddam go away?"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (01/13): "Saddam Hussein's ousting from power will prevent the war. This is the conclusion of the new media and political campaign that is accompanying the build-up of armies in the region. And so, the importance of inspections as the conclusive factor for whether war will be launched is slowly subsiding. The U.S. Secretary of State was very clear when he said that the war is not dependent on inspectors' reports. Placing Saddam's ousting as a condition for preventing the war is a definite signal that the possible war has become the next unavoidable war. Those who know the Iraqi President and who have followed his life and his rule know that he is not a person who would accept such a decision."

#### Editorial Commentary on the Palestinian "Transfer"

-- "Transfer, as an Israeli policy"

Columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the op-ed page of centrist, influential among the elite English daily Jordan Times (01/13): "These days, the highway between Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport and the city of Jerusalem is festooned with political placards and posters. One of them says: 'transfer means peace and security'. Such overtly racist slogans are not being met with the derision they deserve from the Israeli public; neither do the authorities attempt to remove them. 'Transfer' (of native Palestinians out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to neighboring Arab countries, chiefly Jordan) has gained respectability; it has become the stated policy of Israel's far right, while moderates are scared to speak out against it. Yet, Israeli officials must realize that 'transfer' is not a practical option; neither is the perpetuation of the current state of affairs with the Palestinians. The next Israeli government must act radically to break out of the impasse. In order to do that, Israel has three options only: a two-state solution, annexation of the West Bank and Gaza; and 'transfer'. Bush has apparently understood how difficult a situation this is. That is why he proposed a half solution; he publicly asked the Palestinians to replace Arafat, but failed to make a similar overt demand of the Israelis regarding Sharon. When Bush described Sharon as a 'man of peace', he did that half-mockingly. The American President was confident that his listeners were smart enough to understand that he meant the exact opposite of what he said. Time is of the essence. The general election is almost upon us and to win, Sharon only needs a few more Palestinian attacks inside the Green Line."

GNEHM